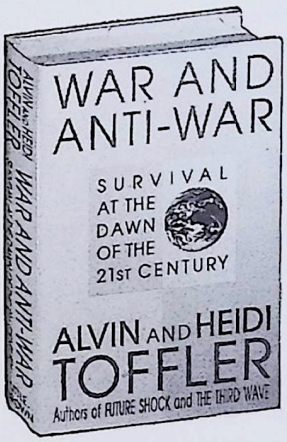
Volume 6, Number 9 November 1993

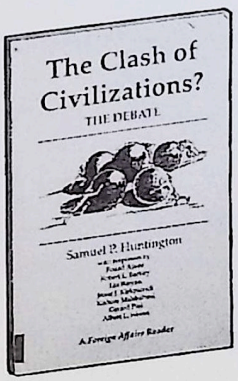
GBN BOOK CLUB

INTELLECTUAL TOOLS FOR THE YEARS AHEAD


WAR AND ANTI-WAR
SURVIVAL AT THE DAWN OF THE 21st CENTURY
ALVIN AND HEIDI TOFFLER
Authors of FUTURE SHOCK and THE THIRD WAVE

WARRING CIVILIZATIONS may replace wars of ideology or nations, according to two quite disparate theories. Either way it goes, our leftover warforms, peace-keeping habits, and commercial expectations would be misleading or even dangerous.

War and Anti-War, by Alvin and Heidi Toffler, proposes that the three major waves of technology—agriculture (First Wave), industry (Second Wave), and knowledge (Third Wave)—express three different forms of conflict, and conflict between them can surprise both sides. Thus the Gulf War pitted an excellent Second Wave Iraqi military against quickly evolving Third Wave US forces, and the outcome was defined by that difference.



Political scientist Samuel Huntington takes a cultural/historical approach in *The Clash of Civilizations?*, an article for *Foreign Affairs*, now reprinted with ripostes from the magazine. He says, for example, that "the most significant dividing line in Europe...may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500." (See map, p. 30.) The line coincides with few national borders; it goes right through Bosnia. What if both the Huntington and Toffler views are correct? Then war might be even stranger than either expects.

Also in your package this month is an issue of *Wired* that has a cover interview with Alvin Toffler by GBN's Peter Schwartz, plus a profile of GBN member Esther Dyson.

—Stewart Brand

THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS?
The Debate

A *Foreign Affairs* Reader. $7.95 from Foreign Affairs, 58 E. 68th St., New York, NY 10021, or phone (212) 734-0400 x221.

THE WEST VERSUS THE REST is the harshest of many harsh divisions that emerge from Huntington's short, eloquent, persuasive essay. Some are comparing it to the article by "X" that defined the containment policy of the Cold War.

Wars were between princes until the French Revolution, says Huntington, then between nations till the end of World War I, then between ideologies till the end of the Cold War. Those were all, in a sense, civil wars within Western civilization. Now the realm of major conflict moves outside to between the West and non-Western civilization, and among non-Western civilizations—which Huntington lists provisionally as "Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African." Nations such as Turkey and Russia, which contain combinations of these, he describes as "torn countries."

Huntington offers policy recommendations for the West to prolong its present pre-eminence, but he says that in the long run the differences are too profound for everyone to just join the West: "For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others."

If you have some arguments with that, see if any of the seven responders provided by *Foreign Affairs* speak for you. I wish more books were this short and pungent and furnished with catcalls from the wings.

In most countries and most religions the people active in fundamentalist movements are young, college-educated, middle-class technicians, professionals and business persons.

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In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head.

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Global political and security issues are effectively settled by a directorate of the United States, Britain and France, world economic issues by a directorate of the United States, Germany and Japan, all of which maintain extraordinarily close relations with each other to the exclusion of lesser and largely non-Western countries.

WAR AND ANTI-WAR
Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century

Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War*; Little, Brown 1993;
315 pages; $23; ISBN 0-316-85024-1

NICHE WARS in profusion are developing in the aftermath of the quasi-industrial Cold War. They are motivated in part by the painful differences between First Wave (agricultural), Second Wave (industrial), and Third Wave (knowledge) civilizations. They are increasingly equipped and decided by Third Wave weapons and doctrine, where the emphasis is on speed, precision, realistic modeling, and communication. Both the weapons and the doctrine are evolving at a faster rate than public consensus or hardware acquisition cycles (15 years, customarily) can keep up with.

The conduct and outcome of the Gulf War was as much a surprise to the American public as it was to Saddam Hussein.

In this well-focused book the Tofflers catch everybody up to the military present, and then proceed to explore the pathways and trends most likely to affect the near future of war and peace-keeping. Along the way they shed some light on the astonishing turnaround in the US military (particularly Army) following the Vietnam debacle.

The technologies and techniques of war-making and wealth-making, they point out, have always been tightly interlinked. This survey of contemporary Third Wave war-making may revise some ideas about Third Wave wealth-making.

[General Donn] Starry led the intellectual exercise that helped lift the U.S. Army from the black hole of demoralization into which it had dropped after the Vietnam War to its peak of performance in the Gulf War. He helped successfully restructure one of the biggest, most bureaucratic and recalcitrant institutions in the world—a task very few captains of industry, dealing with far less cumbersome and complex organizations, have been able to accomplish.

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Certainly, advanced education today is more common in the military than in the highest levels of business. A recent survey by North Carolina's Center for Creative Leadership showed that while only 19 percent of top American managers had earned a postgraduate degree, a remarkable 88 percent of brigadier generals had advanced education.

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[Carl] Builder's proliferation scenario...forces us to confront the extreme.... "It will be possible for an individual to make a nuclear device from materials which are in commerce.... An opponent cannot be deterred by the threat of nuclear weapons if that opponent has no definable society to threaten." Thus, he says, a "terrifying asymmetry" looms ahead.

Previous Book Club Selections

1988
Discos and Democracy -Orville Schell (GBN)
OTA Report on Technology and the Economic Transition
The Home Planet -Rusty Schweickart (GBN)
The Media Lab -Stewart Brand (GBN)
Chaos -James Gleick
The Dreams of Reason -Heinz Pagels
Engines of Creation -Eric Drexler (GBN)
Signal -Whole Earth
Markets -Martin Mayer
The Alchemy of Finance -George Soros
Release 1.0 -Esther Dyson (GBN)

1989
Neuromancer -William Gibson (GBN)
Infinite in All Directions -Freeman Dyson
The Other Path -Hernando de Soto
In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government -Charles Murray
The Last Lion: Alone -William Manchester
Mind Children -Hans Moravec
City -William H. Whyte
Release 1.0 Esther Dyson (GBN)
Beyond Free Trade; 1992, The Global Challenge -Albert Bressand (GBN)
Technologies of Freedom -Ithiel de Sola Pool
Mondo 2000
The New Realities -Peter Drucker
Adventures of a Bystander -Peter Drucker
Science in Action -Bruno Latour
The Ages of Gaia -James Lovelock
How Institutions Think -Mary Douglas
Composing a Life -Catherine Bateson (GBN)

1990
The Competitive Advantage of Nations -Michael Porter (GBN)
The Outlook for Intelligence -Paul Valéry
The Cerebral Symphony -William Calvin (GBN)
From Beirut to Jerusalem -Thomas Friedman
Passion; Passion Sources -Peter Gabriel (GBN)
Charting the Corporate Mind -Charles Hampden-Turner (GBN)
Leadership Is an Art -Max DePree
Shadow Dancing in the USA -Michael Ventura
The Americans: The Democratic Experience -Daniel Boorstin
The Great Good Place -Ray Oldenburg
The Design of Everyday Things -Donald Norman
Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare -Paul Colinvaux
The Practice of the Wild -Gary Snyder (GBN)
New Perspectives Quarterly
The AMEX Bank Review
Whole Earth Review
The Prize -Daniel Yergin (GBN)
Envisioning Information -Edward Tufte

1991
Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity -Richard Rorty
Military Misfortunes -Eliot Cohen, John Gooch
Sweden at the Edge -Michael Maccoby (GBN)
The Art of the Long View -Peter Schwartz (GBN)
Writing Space -Jay Bolter
Virtual Reality -Howard Rheingold
Earth -David Brin
A Pattern Language -Christopher Alexander
Edge City -Joel Garreau (GBN)
Unbounding the Future -Eric Drexler (GBN)
Generations -William Strauss, Neil Howe
SimCity and *SimEarth* -Brøderbund/Maxis
The Discoverers -Daniel Boorstin

1992
The New State of the World Atlas -Michael Kidron, Ronald Segal
The Pacific Rim Almanac -Alexander Besher
Governing the Commons -Elinor Ostrom
The Nissan Report -Steve Barnett (GBN)
Beyond the Limits -Donella Meadows (GBN)
Earth in the Balance -Al Gore
Global Financial Integration -Richard O'Brien (GBN)
Industrial Ecology -Hardin Tibbs (GBN)
Democracy in America -Alexis de Tocqueville
Artificial Life -Steven Levy
Life After Television -George Gilder
Crossing the Postmodern Divide -Albert Borgmann
Scanning the Future -Dutch Central Planning
"Normative Scenarios" -Jay Ogilvy (GBN)
Rubbish! -William Rathje, Cullen Murphy
The End of Equality -Mickey Kaus
Generation X -Douglas Coupland
Mondo 2000 User's Guide to the New Edge
No Nature -Gary Snyder (GBN)
Nerve Net -Brian Eno (GBN)
Us -Peter Gabriel (GBN)

1993
Systems of Survival -Jane Jacobs
Days of Obligation -Richard Rodriguez (GBN)
The New Century -Clem Sunter
Mont Fleur Scenarios -Adam Kahane (GBN)
Tribes -Joel Kotkin
The Structures of Everyday Life -Fernand Braudel
Post-Capitalist Society -Peter Drucker
Complexity-Mitchell Waldrop
Fuzzy Logic -Daniel McNeill, Paul Freiburger
Science
Wired
Wild Earth
Understanding Comics -Scott McCloud
Watchmen -Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons
The Virtual Community -Howard Rheingold
The Whole Internet User's Guide -Ed Krol
The Ecology of Commerce -Paul Hawken (GBN)
The Wheels of Commerce -Fernand Braudel

The GBN Book Club Newsletter is sent out with book mailings to GBN Members. Address Book Club correspondence to Danica Remy at GBN, PO Box 8395, Emeryville, CA 94662. Phone: 510.547.6822. Fax: 510.547.8510. On The WELL, post comments to Stewart Brand (sbb), Danica Remy (remy), or the "Books Cafe" topic. Book Club staff: Christina Gerber, Danica Remy.

Most GBN Book Club books can be ordered by phone from The Tattered Cover Book Store, based in Denver (800.833.9327 extension 1275, ask for June Nay). Delivery takes one to two weeks (in the US) when the books are in stock.

✓ = we've reviewed